

popular sport in El Paso, he says he didn't really have the opportunity to compete until he was a senior in high school.

The sport began to catch on in his town at about the same time he really got involved in it, so he had the advantage of being in on the ground floor.

Since he had been working out on his own long before he began competing he had an advantage as well, he says, and he scored in the top three in every competition he entered.

He says that each time he won, he worked a little harder.

"When you take home a trophy, it kind of inspires you," he says.

POWER LIFTING IS A category of weight lifting divided into three parts. The scores in each part are determined by the weight lifted and the three scores are added up to determine the overall weight lifted.

The three parts are:

Squat - the lifter holds the bar behind the head, across the top of the shoulders, squats down into a deep knee bend until the top of the thigh is below the top of the knee, then stands up again.

Bench press - the lifter lies on a bench, lifts the bar from a rack and extends the arms above the body, then returns the bar to the rack.

Dead lift - the lifter reaches down to grab the bar off the floor, then stands up holding the weights below his waist.

"It really tests more brute strength than style or technique," Lumpee says.

Lumpee, who had never had a coach until he came to Texas A&M, says the most important thing to do in power lifting is to stick with it. Most people give up after a year or so, he says, and if they don't persevere, they fail.

He says he mainly concentrates on not getting injured because injuries cut short most weight lifters' careers.

"The body's joints aren't really accustomed to handling the kind of weight we give them," he says.

Lumpee, who says he works out at least four times a week, is trying to move up one weight class to reach his goal of lifting 2000 pounds at his next meet, the YMCA National Championship in December.

"There are only about 120 people of any body weight who have ever totaled 2000 pounds," he says.

Lifting 2000 pounds in a competition, he says, would involve squatting 782 pounds, bench pressing 457 pounds, and dead lifting 760 pounds. He says if he can get his body weight up from its current 226 pounds to about 235 he should be able to do it.

Lumpee says the YMCA competition will be his last for a while, because he and a partner are going to open a gym in College Station.

"I'm going to be really busy with that, so I don't foresee having enough time to train as much as I would have to in order to compete," he says.

WHEN HE DOES BEGIN competing again, and he says he definitely will, he'll be working toward the Senior National Championship, because by that time he'll no longer qualify as a junior.

"Right now, in the 220-pound class, I'm ranked about 20th in the country and about 25th in the world in the senior division," he says.

If he could get his weight up to 242 pounds, he says he could probably be one of the top 10 senior power lifters in the world.

But, he quickly adds, he doesn't really want to do that right now.

At this point, he wants to concentrate on the gym's opening, graduating before too long, and his girlfriend.

"Besides, there is plenty of time," Lumpee says confidently. "There are lots of people power lifting when they're 50." □



Lumpee adjusts his belt during a weight workout.